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METHODIST BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL
HYDERABAD DECCAN.

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CHILD NATURE AND CHILD NURTURE

BY

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"Dominus doceat nos quid debeamus facere de puero qui nasciturus est."
—JUDGES xiii, 8.

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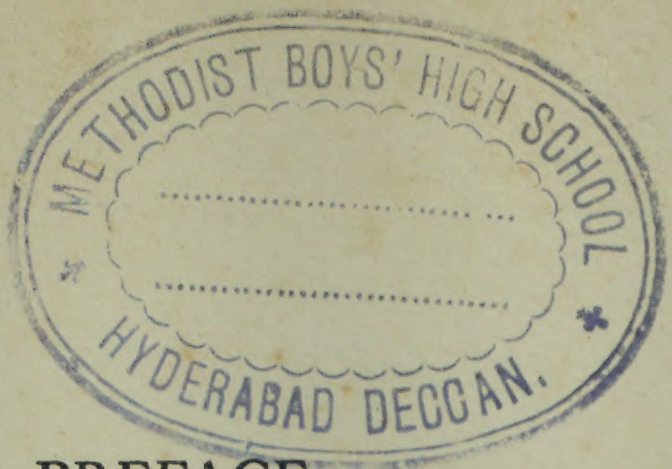

PREFACE

THIS little book is the outcome of a series of lectures delivered at Parkin College, Adelaide. Both the scope and the form of the different chapters have been thus determined. Of necessity many illustrations, more particularly material illustrations, have had to be omitted. The chapter on "The Child and his Toys" loses most by these omissions, but the reader is referred to E. Nesbit's *Wings and the Child,* where photographic illustrations partly fill this need. The author is also indebted to Professor G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence* and to Principal Garvie's *The Old Testament in the Sunday School,* but above all to some of "the babes from whom we learn."

W. K.

PARKIN COLLEGE,
ADELAIDE.

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CHILD NATURE AND CHILD NURTURE

CHAPTER I

The Child and his Activities

DO you ever think when you put your child to bed at night—early, I hope—"What has he accomplished to-day?" I often used to feel like that. There has been another day of washing, feeding, playing, sleeping, going out, and, at length, comes bedtime. All those hours full of busy activity and what is there to show for it? Is Johnny, or Mary, any further on? Has he gained anything? You know an infant's life is a very busy one. Baby starts to learn as soon as he is born, and he works very hard. He never ceases while he is awake and happy. All his activities are practice for him in the arts of living. He has to learn even to look at things—to focus his eyes. At first he seems only conscious of light and darkness, but soon his eyes fix on objects. Then he practises following a moving object with his eyes. This is a great advance, and usually noted by the parents with joy. We should keep

the child surrounded with beautiful objects so that he may learn to use his eyes upon them ; the beauty of what he studies will grow into his nature. Beauty, whether it appeals to the sense of sight or to one of the other senses, seems to be a special and peculiar quality of phenomena. Sweet music, fragrant odours, polished surfaces, if not delicate flavours, may, I suppose, be classified under the name of beauty ; but we think specially of what is pleasing to the eye. Most things in nature have a purpose which is fairly apparent, and it is a common question when we meet a new and strange object to ask, " Of what use is it ? " But " beauty " seems to be in a category apart. It seems non-utilitarian in the process of evolution. No doubt it serves a purpose in the divine economy, but its use in a worldly and material sense is not easy to recognise. It really seems to stand for the expression of sheer happiness (*cf.* singing and dancing). Religious people will admit that it is a revelation of the Creator's self ; perhaps it represents His joy in creation. Certainly it appeals to all normal minds as an expression of joy—the *joie de vivre*. " A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," and to create a picture or a song or dance is to let that joy pour forth. Children do appreciate the best.

The child has to learn whether the things he sees are parts of himself or something external and disconnected. We say he is playing with his toes ; he is really learning. Hall says, " Non-volitional movements and rudimentary impulses

are relics of past utility. Play is from within, from congenital hereditary impulsion." He has to discover that every time he catches those pink moving things (and of course he only touches them by chance at first), he has sensations both in his hands and in his feet. Then by constant effort, by many trials and many failures, he learns to grasp things. He finds out how to steer his hand towards what he sees with his eyes. It often goes wrong (*cf.* ourselves drawing while looking in a mirror). It's hard work and baby toils away at it. We say he is playing, but it is a God-given instinct for development and if only we understood more about it we might be able to help the little learner ; we might refrain from distracting him from the important business of his little life (*e.g.* we can put suitable objects within reach). The process of co-ordination is not an easy one. To work together hand and eye, or ear and eye, takes an infinite amount of practice (*cf.* threading a needle, playing ping-pong, locating a sound, as Montessori does). If we watch baby, we can see these things going on.

Learning to walk is a most complicated business. Baby has to learn to control his limbs, to put his foot in a special place and, while he does it, he has to balance himself. He has learned beforehand to balance himself on two feet, now he must stand on one, and that while he moves the other. It isn't easy for baby, but by continual practice he gets going and learns to walk.

Then think of language ; of course it takes years to learn to speak properly, but isn't it wonderful that a baby with his wee undeveloped mind can say things in about twelve or twenty months of life ? Remember, at first he could not *make* one sound differ from another. Then he learned to make two or three different sounds. He had to learn which sounds meant " Mother " and which meant " go out " (not " ta-ta," I hope), and, not only so, he had to learn how *to make* those special sounds just when he wanted them. Have you ever tried to learn a language —and could you talk it as well in eighteen months or two years as your baby talks English ? And you have a grown-up mind ! He is a wonderful creature, the baby ! Because he is learning language, and learning it from us, we have a great responsibility. It is folly to accustom a child to words of flattery, and, worse still, to discuss him in his presence. We only make him self-conscious and unnatural, and teach him how language may be misused.

Further, we want to teach him the right names for things. Confucius taught that truth and righteousness have their beginning in the right naming of things. He should not be called a king who is not kingly, nor should that be named an eye which does not see. Everything and everybody should fulfil the function and character which their name designates. The old Hebrew idea that there's something magic in a name is an idea that is not without value.

When once you have named a thing you have acquired certain powers over it: you have made it possible to classify the thing: you have limited it. There are, once you have named it, hundreds of things it cannot be, because you have described or defined it. Once you have called an object a tree it cannot be a horse or a star. So names are important and should be given with due consideration. Let us give up the silly terminology which includes "gee-gees," "tick-tick," and "puff-puffs." If by chance the onomatopæic name comes naturally to the child we may allow him to use it, but my experience is that the adult generally suggests it. In any case the child has to learn that "puff-puff" is the name, not of the engine, but of the noise it makes, and he may as well learn "engine" straight away.

I can personally vouch for the following examples of the child's use of words: A little two-year-old was struggling to form adjectives and spoke of the toy-strewn floor as "condition-y" (*i.e.* in a "condition" meriting disapproval). At three years he remarked that ducks had "spokes" in their feet, and at four he pressed his wet feet on a towel, saying "I'm blotting my feet." At three he bemoaned the fact he "hadn't got permission to play with the wood," and "suitable" and "certainly" were correctly used by him. His brother at seven years exclaimed in gratitude once, "I wonder what'll be the end of that delightful person." At eight he preferred a certain type

of railway carriage because "it's easier to converse in them." The same boy at nine said, "I wish I were young, because you can rely upon your parents," and, on the receipt of an illustrated book, "What a beautiful picture! I'd like to congratulate the artist who painted it." At eleven he wrote to a school chum, "You are glad, I presume," and at the same age said to his mother "Your explanation is inadequate." At ten this boy developed a love of words and delighted in fine-sounding phrases like "Do you suggest illumination of the room by electricity?" and "I'm absorbing moisture in the form of tea." These remarks were consciously humorous, but it was with perfect naturalness that he said, "Father, let us resume our discussion of philosophy."

Baby is all the time forming habits; hence the maxim—"Begin as you mean to go on." We cannot begin too early. Habits once formed are not easy to break: this is true whether they are good habits or bad ones. We need to remember with infants, as well as with older children and adults, how important is the power of suggestion. It may work for good or ill. For instance, how often, when baby screams, do people say, "What a temper he has!" Temper *is* very infectious and he *may* have copied his mother or nurse, but, whether that be so or not, isn't it very wrong to impress into his character this bad temper idea? Anybody feels cross when told he's in a temper; if you are brought up to believe you have an

uncontrollable temper you are very likely to have one. Habits of self-control should be taught early. Pre-destination is a very real thing to us grown-ups because what we have done in the past determines what we do to-day and to-morrow. We are, in a sense, free to break our customary routine, but, as a matter of fact, we don't. You can prophesy with a fair degree of accuracy what any one, whom you know at all intimately, will do under given circumstances. The infant, however, is not like that : his habits of thought and action are not established. He can be moulded. Everything he does, every response he makes, is of vital importance for his future. If you think of the idea of habit as a path in the brain you can easily understand this. Once a thing is done one way the chances are tremendously in favour of its being done that way again, and each time makes the probability stronger. Even a baby a few days old is capable of forming habits. He may have slept beside his mother so often that he cannot be induced to sleep in his cradle. We know, too, how regularly a young baby will repeat his time-table and wake to be fed. If he is fed during the night once, twice, or oftener, he will wake and cry to be fed every night. Nowadays doctors are training infants to go without food for longer intervals, and they are said to thrive just as well. Some little ones develop the habit of expecting to be rocked or sung to while they go to sleep, and some must be nursed to sleep. I once knew a boy of seven

who couldn't be put to bed until he had fallen asleep in his mother's arms.

The first step in baby's moral training is to form good habits. Of course, we want him to form the habit of deliberately, or rather personally, choosing the right thing and not having it forced upon him. The modern view of self-discipline—which is not really so very modern—is very commendable, but it may be achieved through contact with well-disciplined people, who have regular habits and to whose ways baby must learn to accommodate himself. He hasn't the sense to choose, nor can we let him rule our regularity. The baby has his rights, and so has the adult, and both may be conserved by a judicious and commonsense management of affairs. The child has to be taught to speak the truth and hate lies long before he can understand the social obligations involved, and he must learn to control himself in many ways in order to fit into the scheme of things. Iron is hard and fire burns : it is in the nature of these things so to be, and do, and it is in the nature of mothers and fathers to need rest at night and to have occupations which preclude rocking baby to sleep. Moreover, it is not difficult to train him to like his cradle. The need of repose and quiet is common to both baby and parents. The only thing to do is to let him lie in it. Put him in when he is fed, whether awake or asleep ; he can there carry on his self-education. Of course, one needs to do this regularly if one wants to establish a habit.

If baby is in contact with systematic, well-ordered lives he will soon become systematic and regular himself. What a saving this is to all of us ! Isn't it natural that a baby who is fed because he cries should soon come to think that he must cry to be fed ? He feels it is expected of him and accommodates himself accordingly. If we are irregular in our management of him he cannot see to what scheme he must conform. Much of our life is taken up with the endeavour to discover what laws govern the things we use. We want a time table for trains and trams ; we want to know what things are dangerous to touch, and on what conditions we can use electricity, etc. Baby is trying to learn when food is available and when sleep is possible. If we vary continually the place, time, and manner of these things we confuse him in his attempts to understand and act up to them. Homer Lane may not believe in a time table, but I do, just as much for the child as for his mother. Early habits of order and discipline, early powers of self-control, are developed in this way. The very common use of the baby's comforter often surprises me. Possibly doctors and nurses have withdrawn their ban upon it since my time. I know in the big Infirmary in one of our largest cities there were notices posted warning parents of the dangers of such troubles as adenoids, etc. Even when the comforters are kept clean, pinned to the frock, and so on, they seem to me unnatural and harmful. The continual waste of energy and of saliva must be

unhealthy. In any case the comforter is a species of deceit.

Punishment is often a problem to modern people. I was once asked, " How soon is baby old enough to be whipped ? " and I remember a young father insisting that baby's hand be smacked if he touched the tea things. Again, a thoughtful mother whipped her boy because he stumbled too frequently, adding her own punishment to nature's. How far are these people justified ? Some educationalists would say, " Not at all," and I must confess that corporal punishment is to my mind a thing to be avoided. There is no need to go into all the old arguments now. We can all admit, I think, that corporal punishment does harden the child, produces a sense of unfairness and an alienation which, to the honour of the child, is generally only temporary. If a child is brought up to look upon it with horror, as only an extreme penalty for a very bad offence, it will rarely, if ever, be needed. The question, however, of the present day is not so much whether corporal punishment is justified as whether punishment at all is right. Obviously, with few commands there will be few disobediences, but there still remain harmful and hurtful tricks which children will play on one another (boys are often brutal), and many anti-social habits in the child which must be eradicated. No doubt he will will outgrow some of them, but is it fair that others less selfishly-minded should suffer until he does so ? Some would urge the

value of child public opinion, or leave the children themselves to deal with the offender. Neither way is satisfactory. Children are apt to be vindictive and personal in their judgments and all would suffer. Spencer's idea of fitting the punishment to the crime has much to commend it, and can often be applied, but personally I should hesitate to stick a pin into a child, even if he had done so to another. We can only try and bring home to the child by reasonable methods the wrongness of his act. If this fails it may be necessary to mark our disapproval either by ignoring the offender, cutting off relations with him or limiting his freedom in some way. To set him a task, which might otherwise be enjoyable, is merely to spoil that piece of work and create a distaste for it in the future. If a task be set, it should be of a special kind. Whatever is done, as soon as possible after the punishment is administered we ought to try and resume former happy relations.

I have alluded chiefly to the activities of the infant, but the growing child is learning and perfecting his newly acquired powers *by his* activities. He runs, he handles things (he wants to handle everything in order to investigate it, and I would let him as far as possible), he watches, listens, and talks; how he talks! I have seen a child playing with bricks or dolls talking all the time about them, or to them, whether there was any human audience visible or not. Children's games are their natural and instinctive method of development. Just as

the kitten chases its tail or a reel, apparently with the sheer joy of life, but in reality with the unrecognised purpose of equipping itself with skill and prowess for hunting mice and birds, so with the child the unconscious motive behind his play is that of perfecting his knowledge and his abilities: all his games are really practice in the art of living. Every effort at building, at impersonation, at running and jumping is an attempt to get familiar with the world and to develop his own powers. Hall says: "In play every mood and movement is instinctive with heredity. In spontaneous, non-imitative, instructive play we see activities of past generations—the child is in a lost paradise—play is the ideal type of exercise."

We need to remember too that the process is going on not only in the five senses of common parlance, but also in the imagination and the mental originality of the child. Not only is his body active, touching, tasting, seeing, smelling, hearing, but his mind is active too. He not only makes inductions, he also makes deductions, in a rather crude and sweeping way. He is very ready to argue a relationship of cause and effect between two phenomena which are merely sequential, as the old nurse did in *Ten Degrees Backward*, by E. T. Fowler (*e.g.* "I knew a man in Poppenhall who told lies and once when mending a roof he fell and broke his leg. It was a judgment on him").

The child is forming opinions and often they are unchanged through later years.

Every little boy and gal,
Every child that is born alive,
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a Conservative.

What the child hears discussed, what he becomes familiar with in the realm of thought, that forms the basis of his opinion. A little boy playing at fishing-boats called to his sister, "Let us put out into the deep," and another day he wanted to "build his castle on the rocks" so that it should not crumble to pieces. He was familiar with New Testament thoughts. If he is continually hearing one point of view expressed, emphasised, substantiated, he naturally adopts it for his own; he naturally tends to believe it is true. Advertisers know this. A sign declaring that such and such tea is good makes its mark on the mind of those who read it. In view of the tremendous power of tradition and of the great weight of inherited belief and opinion it is really remarkable that progress in thought is achieved even at the rate it is.

The child should be encouraged to think for himself and taught to discuss his ideas even in the simplest stages. The child was expressing his own ideas when he said, "I'm growing into Noël's (his older brother) nature: I'm up to shirts," and again, "Have all stories a moral? How about history: it's not moral?" There is original thinking behind "What did you see in the other world before you were born?" asked of the little brother. "Did God put the

hill in front of the train for fun ? " is a question showing a real attempt to understand the deprivations of baby life. The hill hid the train from his view. If only we could always be fair, and always give him both sides of a case he would develop greater originality and a broader basis of thought for his opinions. In his play and in his talk the child lets his imagination picture the life that results from his ideas of things, he lets himself express in activity the thoughts and opinions he holds. Expression is vital to him. By it he tests his views of reality, by it he appropriates more completely and understands more fully the principles and laws of the world around him.

CHAPTER II

The Child and his World

THE child in his waking hours is almost continually engaged in acquiring control of himself and in learning what the world is like. The world will one day be his and it is most important to acquire facility in handling his future belongings. He works with almost feverish activity at his appointed task, yet there is no undue haste. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" is his motto. How often he will jump over the same step or stone, turn the same handle, climb on the same sofa, and make the same noise! He will do it until he is so perfect at it that he has ceased to find it interesting. Then he will look out for some new activity. Habit is already taking toll of him and what he has once done at the sight of an object that he will tend to do again. He will cry to be taken out of his pram when he reaches the same spot at which he was taken out before, and he will want to push the pram just as far as he did on the previous occasion. If you humour him with a lullaby one night, he will want it the next; if you give him a dummy to send him to sleep once, you will find it hard

to get him to sleep without one another time. His little brain is wonderfully retentive, and he early begins to connect things with one another and with experiences. The stone where he tripped will remind him of his fall and he will be careful, or the sight of the shop will remind him of his enjoyment of sweets bought there, and it will be difficult to get him past. If he sees the ducks, he will want to feed them ; if he sees the cat, he will want to stroke it, because that is what is connected in his mind with the animal in question. My little boy could scarcely talk when first introduced to an elephant, but he responded " 'troke her "—his usual response to an animal. We cannot do better than let baby teach himself. Experience is always the best teacher, but we can put him in the right environment—one which will help him to learn. We can surround him with appropriate objects ; he will do the rest.

There are some who would even leave the child to go through pain and suffering in his efforts to gain experience, but I think this is where the function of the adult comes in. We can give the child the opportunity to benefit by the experience of the ages, which is his lawful inheritance. We can warn him that fire burns, that scissors and knives hurt ; we are justified in preventing him from making the discovery for himself by removing these things from his reach. When he has gained more general experience and is better able to control his movements, then we can run the risk, and if he chooses

to disregard our warnings the damage is less likely to be serious. This, then, is the continuation of that element of discipline which began with the enforcement of regular periods in the cradle and regular times of feeding. For the older child as for the younger this need not be irksome. He should be quite unconscious of it, and will be if properly administered. The best way to get an unhealthy desire out of a child's mind is not to say " don't," but to put a new and easily gratified desire there instead. If he has seen the scissors and cries for them, it is foolish to stand and watch him with the scissors in view waiting for him to stop. Put something attractive in sight, talk to him about it, not in an excited way as if you feared you might not be successful but with calmness, taking for granted that the forbidden thing is no longer thought of as possible. A wise mother will realise that so long as scissors are forbidden, so long will they be interesting. She will, as soon as possible, give the child a *suitable* pair of scissors, *with material to cut*. When he has mastered the art of cutting he will leave the scissors alone, except for brief occasions when he feels the need for practice or needs them as a means to some other end.

And if the child does get hurt, as he is sure to do amid all his activities, what a lot of suffering can be spared if the right action is taken. True sympathy is often disguised under apparent inattention. You hear a bump and know baby is hesitating whether to cry or not. He is far

more likely to make a fuss and therefore to suffer additional pains if he is conscious you are looking or listening. If you are intent on your book or your work he will probably get over his bump without a cry, but if you run to him with " Oh, poor Baby, you did get a bump," of course he will feel the pain and make a noise. Even if baby really hurts himself it is very wrong to make a fuss. The little mind is sensitive to what you think about his injury and he takes his idea of the nature of it from your behaviour (*e.g.* " you do look ill "). If you are excited and worried, he gets frightened. If you lose your composure and become hysterical, probably he will collapse. A friend of mine lost her son at fourteen months through an accident with the teapot. She told me she had often wished she had kept calmer when she found him scalded, instead of seizing the child in an excited way. She realised too late that she had alarmed the little one and had added to the trouble. In these cases the cause of death is nearly always shock. Quiet, quick action, with an occasional word of reassurance, does much to help the sufferer. If you are really alarmed there is all the more need to conceal your feelings. Should baby be less seriously hurt apply remedies and then, if sleep be out of the question, some quiet and restful occupation should be found (*e.g.* story-telling). One must always remember, too, that the children who are well will be alarmed and become troublesome if they see the grown-ups are anxious and worried. Such a lot

of trouble can be saved in these directions by a little forethought and self-control.

In talking about the child and the world, we need to remember that the world as we know it does not exist for the baby. All he cares about is a little world of his own. In it everything is wonderful, and everybody is kindly disposed. A great many things may happen, which have never been experienced. He has seen a big man and dreams that even bigger men are possible—giants. He has no critical knowledge to tell him that giants are not found. He has seen a little man and dreams that even less men may exist—dwarfs. He cannot check this idea, as yet, but I think these notions gradually get toned down or discarded as reason and the critical faculty develop. Of course, one would never tell the child that these creatures exist; one merely takes the child's point of view, and tells tales of what these "possible" beings might do. Fairy tales are not lies. They are merely the fictions of unrestrained imagination making happen the things it wants to happen. They are to the child what an exciting novel is to the adult, and, like the novel, they generally exemplify some truth. Most of the old fairy stories are simply love stories in which the good and beautiful succeed and the ugly, the horrid, and the bad perish ignominiously. This is very healthy doctrine and moreover it is true in the long run. Those who object to fairy tales because they are not true, should also object to the almost universal practice of personifying

inanimate objects. Just as primitive man finds it difficult to distinguish between what is alive and what is not, so the child tends to credit with life and with speech many of the things he finds in the world. He will not only tell you what the horse says (perhaps the horse does say things), but the cart too will be endowed with speech, and will say whether it likes its work, the horse or the driver. The rain drops are kind or unkind according to how the child has been encouraged to look upon them, and the same with the trees, the sun, the child's clothes, boots, etc. It may not be true that these things can talk, but it is a great help to the fun of life, as well as to the business of life, to pretend they can.

Again, the fiction may be gradually dropped or transformed into the truth without any violent shock or sudden discovery. We all tend to credit animals with the feelings we have ourselves (*cf.* pets). It is not very different, is it? We all tend to endow with personality the objects around us, especially those that are near and dear to us. A picture or a chest that has been in the family for generations seems to acquire, and does acquire, a hallowed meaning. It seems to have absorbed some of the personalities of its owners. Isn't the difference between the child's attitude and ours largely one of degree? Our attitude is really a refined and philosophised form of the childish, more crude way of personifying things. Then let him imagine that the forces which work in some hidden way, bringing reward to the

virtuous and confounding their enemies, are personal, and let him imagine them as fantastically as he pleases. Having granted that fairies are permissible, stories about them are inevitable. Moreover, they are an agreeable and acceptable means of imparting the great truths of life. The Father Christmas story should merely be one of the fairy legends, and the child taught to act the part of Father Christmas to the rest of the household.

I have mentioned the child's sense of wonder. This is an almost universal characteristic of childhood and it seems to me that we grown-ups would be better and have a truer conception of the universe if we could keep our sense of wonder. The pity of it is that we become so clever that we know everything there is to be known; we become blasé and nothing is marvellous to us because we understand all about it (*cp.* "Flower in the crannied wall"). The world is full of wonderful things and it is our privilege to introduce the little stranger to them. He will find roads and railways, trams and wheels, lifts and lights, all very marvellous. He will ask innumerable questions about them. If we are wise we shall answer as well as we can, and shall feel it worth while to explain to the best of our ability. We shall not say, "Oh, don't worry. Keep quiet, can't you?" A working knowledge of the machinery which makes possible the life of to-day, is one of the first essentials of an active mind in contact with it. The child's mind is working and acting all

the time, trying to take in and sort up all the various impressions it receives. Every new experience has to be classified and assimilated. It may be our fault if something goes into the class of unrecognised things. There is a big, but decreasing, class of such things pressing in the child's mind and making hazy all the knowledge he acquires. Gradually he will disentangle the confusion and a motor car will be a motor car quite distinct from a tram or an engine.

Not only inanimate objects arouse the wonder of the child's mind ; he finds in animal life a fascinating study—the cat, the ducks, and the birds will provide much food for thought and amusement. He enjoys feeding them because it brings him into relation with them directly. It establishes a bond between him and his pets which may be very valuable, not only from an educational point of view, but also from a moral, since, through it, the child learns self-control, self-sacrifice and thoughtfulness for others. The wonder and marvel of the life of animals need never leave the child, and will be found a valuable asset when he begins to ask questions about the origin of life.

This last remark applies also to the natural interest of the child in plant life. The development of the tiny seed and the growth of the plant, as well as the formation of the flower and fruit, are matters of intense wonder to the child. Would that we too still saw the wonder of the Creator's ways ! Apart from this motive, we do well to cultivate this instinctive desire for

information. It adds so tremendously to the interest of walks, holidays and picnics, if there is something interesting to be discovered. And in later life there are few hobbies more delightful, more instructive, more altogether enriching than that of investigating nature and her samples.

The world for the child consists not only in his fairy fancies, the world of things, animals and plants, but real live people play a large part in it. First there is the home circle with mother, the guardian angel. All the members of this group are to be trusted, but most trustworthy of all is mother. The infant trusts everybody, and generally he is justified, but as he grows older he becomes more suspicious. Perhaps he has heard conversations which make him so. How often is a child spoiled by things said not to him, but in his presence! If grown-ups would only remember that baby can hear and understand long before he can talk, they might be more careful in what thay say. We certainly ought to avoid talking about the child in his presence. To repeat something he has said, something funny or clever, in his hearing, is to make him self-conscious (an intolerable thing in a little child), vain, insolent, and eager to show off. The charm of childhood consists largely in the *naïveté* and simplicity with which it expresses itself, and there is no surer way of ruining these characteristics than the foolish practice of laughing at a straightforward remark, or encouraging the child to think that he

is wonderful, by repeating in his hearing what he has said or done. Neither should his scrapes or failings be told over before him. That is a certain way to make him think his misdeeds are something to be proud of. No wonder he gets into mischief if he hears his exploits detailed with relish to admiring visitors. One could almost make the rule never to laugh at the child, for if he expects and wants it, he is behaving in a most undesirable way, seeking to draw attention to himself under the unpleasing impression that he is clever; if he does not want it, you will only kill those tender flowers of naturalness and simplicity, which are so large a part of the charm of childhood. The only time when it is justifiable to laugh at a child is on occasions when he himself is uncertain whether to laugh or cry at his folly or his misfortune. A laugh will often be a real help at such a time.

In considering the relations of the child with other people, both in the family and out of it, one comes up against the question, "Shall we impart to the child, who is perfectly natural, our conventional ideas about how he ought to conduct himself? Need we tell him that certain things are considered improper before visitors, which possibly are permissible with his own people?" He must not make the boisterous noise or the untidy (*i.e.* in the eyes of outsiders) pile of toys which he makes when there are no visitors. Certain arbitrary things are rude, such as keeping on his hat before ladies;

certain things must not be discussed in public, such as the details of baby's toilet, or even the truth must sometimes be suppressed in the interests of Mrs. Grundy. It is a trouble to those who love the frank straightforwardness of the child that he should have to be taught to be artificial. Yet much of our convention is really largely self-control and courtesy. We need to avoid talking about ourselves, which we shall do if we cease thinking about ourselves, and we need to think about the comfort and happiness of others then we shall desist from an unkind remark, even if it is true. Many grown-ups have never grasped it, but if the child lives in an atmosphere of loving thoughtfulness he will soon be affected by it, and he will imitate a good custom just as he does a bad one. It is certainly very desirable to give the child a motive for these seemingly arbitrary rules and regulations wherever it is possible. The spirit of the home will count for more in making a polite and gentle behaviour than any number of laws and commands. Indeed laws and commands will scarcely be necessary if consideration for others is the dominant note in the home, and if the necessary example is consistently set.

A very important part of this example is quietness. If a mother is continually, or even frequently, in a state of rush and bustle, if she has a noisy voice, if she yells the child's name when she wants him, or yells to the man at the door, if she works noisily and talks noisily she

cannot wonder that her child is noisy. We must cultivate a quiet restful manner, a calm way of going about our daily duties. Above all let us learn to be silent with baby. It will teach him to be quiet with us. It makes for trust, for peace of mind and for a sense of security. A good romp and squeal and shout may be necessary for a child, but he should never be encouraged to think that is the only, or even the chief, kind of fun. He will do pretty nearly what is expected of him in this as in other departments.

It is one of the essentials of a good mother, to my mind, that she should devote some part of every day to sheer and simple play with her little one. She may with advantage prepare a game; she may wisely provide him with materials which will ensure his learning certain lessons and acquiring certain arts, but beyond and above this there is great delight for the mother who can forget she is grown up, and can be a child with the child. Have you ever known the joy of that frank surprised look, almost a stare, which a child gives to a grown-up when he or she first does or says something which only a child is expected to say or do, something which reveals how near the adult has come to the little playmate? I have. The child seems to wonder whether you are poking fun at him, but a steady gaze at your calm face has reassured him and he accepts you as one who understands. Do you understand the "Unseen Playmate"? Do you remember having

such yourself? I do. It makes a big gulf between the child and the adult if the play idea of the little one is ruthlessly squashed, but what a bond if mother can play at it too—this notion of another little child accompanying us! If you would win a child's heart, if you would hope to persuade him of anything, you must first look at the world through his eyes and see what he sees; then you must follow where he leads you.

CHAPTER III

The Child and his Toys

WE have spoken of the "Child and his Activities" and the "Child and his World." Now I want to say something about a quite important part of baby's little life—his toys. So many people have no idea of the needs of a child in this department, and they give such unsuitable presents that a thoughtful mother does not know what to do with them. For instance, a baby of twelve months should not have a tin train or a tin motor, even if the excited donor does call the toy a "Puff-puff." Cheap tin toys are often manufactured out of old tins which have been flattened out and cut into the required shape. You can often see the decoration of its former service on the inside or underneath of the toy. Apart from this rather unwholesome fact, tin toys are very unsuitable for young children who want something they can bite, suck, or, at all events, clutch tightly in the spasms of cutting teeth. We all know how baby will suddenly grab and squeeze his toy, a hand, or a cushion when he is teething. It is only sensible, then, to give him something that will be safe at these

times. He may have his ring of bone or ivory and bite that to his heart's content; he may like, and be allowed, a smooth spoon or rattle, and as a toy pure and simple let him have a stuffed animal. Many children love a fluffy bunny (of course the fluff must be secure) or a woolly lamb. It depends on what they are familiar with. Do let us call things by their right names and then there will be no unlearning to be done. One thing to beware of with bought animals is the pins which generally fix in the eyes. If ever you present a baby with a stuffed rabbit or dog see that its eyes are securely stitched on. Really the home-made animals are the best. We had an elephant made of strong grey cotton material with black shoe-buttons for eyes, and it never wore out. It served for many a game when the children had got past the stage of wanting to nurse it or to drag it along with a string. It is well to give a good deal of thought to the selection of baby's toys; they have a part to play in moulding and making his character as well as his mind. See to it that they are true to life, that they are beautiful and pleasant to handle.

It is far better for a child that he should have a few good toys than a number of cheap and breakable ones, but these few should be carefully chosen. A big ball is an object of delight to a little child and, as soon as ever he is ready for them, a box of bricks. If you choose the cubes with letters on them baby will probably begin to learn his alphabet very soon. Be that as it

may, he will practise putting the blocks upon one another, and to your surprise and possible annoyance he will delight in knocking them down again. If suitably encouraged he will find equal pleasure in putting the blocks away as in playing with them. The interest of fitting them into their proper places in the box will provide a quiet spell before bedtime. I have seen children most eager to put in the bricks that they have been playing with, and even if it is regarded as a game what harm is done? What discipline is lost? Surely it is better to make a child want the right thing than to compel him to do it while he remains unwilling. The trouble with most of us is that we want to do the wrong thing. I mention this phase of discipline because you do occasionally meet people who think that if a child (or for that matter a grown-up) is doing something he likes he is not being trained, and is not developing character. (I think these people are rarer in Australia than in England, but they do exist.) They forget that character is largely made up of habit, and that the habit of liking the right thing is the best and most helpful of all. The habit of being happy comes an easy second. It is a habit to cultivate.

A box of good solid bricks will last many years and is a good investment. Bricks are so adaptable; baby can put two or three together and call them a train, or he can make a castle, a tree, a tram, a boat; a chair, a bed; or he can call a single brick any of these things when he

begins to play games involving a number of objects. This it is that makes bricks always so popular. Jack-in-the-box is all right, as far as he goes, especially if he be an attractive Jack to look at when he pops up, but he can never be anything else but a Jack-in-the-box. I previously mentioned the desirability of having beautiful toys, and I would emphasise this. The smooth polished surface of well-made and well-finished bricks will not only be a joy to baby, but will also act upon his character. The continual association with crude or ugly things must starve or pervert the æsthetic sense, as well as develop a mind satisfied with unfinished and careless workmanship. You demand a high standard from a child in his own work when you give him always the best. Also, I would prohibit the ugly and the bizarre. There are some toys which seem to our perverted grown-up taste to be funny and attractive because of their very hideousness, but these do not naturally appeal to a child. If he laughs at the grinning golliwog or the impossible eye-winking cat, it is because he sees that he is expected to do so, and not because it is natural to him to do so. (E. Nesbit says we have to explain that the thing is not frightful, but funny, before we can persuade the child to accept it.) Just as bricks are such adaptable toys—and by the by, have some big bricks as well as little ones (we had some plank ends from the joiner's and the children of two, three or four found them a most acceptable toy; the bricks

measured about eighteen inches by three by one-and-a-half ; some we cut in two and some into three in order to be able to build a wall with a window)—so are dolls, not character dolls whose clothes will not take off, but loose-limbed every-day dolls that can act any part from a baby to a policeman. The fine and wonderful Spanish dancer may be admired one day, but she gives place next day to the straightforward doll who doesn't pretend to be anything but can be everything in turn, just as the fine mechanical man with a grindstone will be a delight one day and be wound up many a time, but will yield on the morrow to the dear old bricks, and the animals that are only simple animals. (*Cf. Wings and the Child.*)

Perhaps you are wondering what it is that I have in mind as likely for the child to play with his toys. I am always very interested to notice how much of a child's play is taken up with getting ready his scene of action. That is, of course, when he has reached the age when he requires a scene. At first his train will run about everywhere, but later he will want a station and bridges. He will make roads and rivers, especially if he has recently been a journey involving these. The child's natural play seems to be the representation of what is gradually becoming familiar to him. What he sees that will he try to make, especially if the object or the action be comparatively new to him, or not yet fully understood by him. Children in towns will play at different games from children in the

country, because they are accustomed to see different things going on. Their natural playthings will also be different. It is good that the child should discover in nature some of his playthings. Acorns, pebbles, shells, pine cones, as well as certain objects of domestic use, such as clothes pegs, cotton reels, match boxes (of these every child should have a supply, they are both cheap and useful). Boxes of all shapes and kinds, and various articles from the kitchen will all be very suitable. If you have played with him, as I hope you have, he will be capable quite early of keeping a consecutive line of thought throughout his game. The fiction of a journey may be continued through all the stages of packing, driving to the station, waiting for the train, riding in the train, arriving, being met, etc.

I hope you have taught him to put into his play on the floor (for all my talk presupposes that you do play with him on the floor, it is the most suitable place) the stories he loves you to tell him. He will readily build the wood for Snow White and Rose Red to meet the dwarf. He will suggest where and how the cottage should be built, and you will let him. The fault with so many grown-ups is they want to do everything themselves. It is baby who must play, you must merely give him companionship in his play. But you must enter fully into the game. Your interest makes baby think it's a worthy game, as well as knits closer the bond between you. In games of this kind more than half the time is taken up in building the venue

of the story, but all this is real play to the child. It is helping him to realise what he has pictured in his mind; it is developing his manual dexterity; it is a constant demand upon his powers of memory, of thought, and of originality. It is, in short, just an instance of that necessary self-expression without which our educational friends tell us there is no real impression. To return to the subject of materials, you will find that for the people and animals required in a story or similar game, the men from the halma or draughts-box will be very acceptable. They will stand where they are put and are easily moved into position. Dominoes are useful for steps, and chessmen for gate-posts or decoration.

I have spoken so far chiefly of indoor games, partly because I have been contemplating the little child who, when he goes out, is usually taken for a walk, or, if he goes alone into the garden, runs to and fro finding objects of interest, or exploring in general without the need of specific toys. Even here, however, there are some almost indispensable playthings. They are a rope, which will serve for reins or skipping or anything else required, a ball, a cart, barrow, or truck of some kind, which can be pulled or pushed, and which will carry a load of coal, chips, apples, cabbages, according to the custom of the district.

Further, wherever possible baby should frequently have access to a sand-pit. This material, so plastic, so clean, so pleasant because it yields readily to baby's will, so illimitable in

its possibilities to the child mind, is a most useful medium of expression. Not only can he poke it about and dig it up, but he can mould it into hills, houses, castles, railroads. (Have you ever shown him how to make tunnels, embankments, level crossings, bridges and platforms all along the route of a railway? I have done it often and myself found it fascinating.) Plasticine or modelling wax is, I suppose, the best indoor equivalent. The sand models suffer one serious defect—they are not permanent, as the paper model may be. Although I find children seldom return with the same zest and fervour to a game once they have had to abandon it, yet the fact that their structure need not be destroyed when completed does appeal to them. As grown-ups we can appreciate the feeling that, after putting in our best work and ever such a long time, we do not want to see the result demolished. This is really much more of a grown-up attitude, for childhood is prodigal of both time and energy, but sometimes the child feels it too. It is possible to get satisfaction in this direction, even out of doors, by building in an undisturbed corner of the garden, a model as desired. I once assisted in the erection of several cages for a miniature zoo, by means of sticks driven into the ground. The remnants are there to this day. I also remember various stables, with loads of real hay. In the same way the building of enchanted palaces and magic cities, as suggested by E. Nesbit, can be done either out of doors or in. The difference would

be in the materials used. Indoors you could lend your brass bowls or domes, your small figures of elephants, your chessmen and odd ornaments, but these would have to be dispensed with outside. You might spare a few pegs, and, of course, reels could be taken out. Acorns, twigs, stones, slates, shells, etc., would furnish the necessary equivalent of the indoor articles.

Do you know how to build a fairy palace? E. Nesbit gives a fascinating description in *Wings and the Child*. If you have never known the joy of making a magic city, start at once. You will be entranced by it. There are two distinct types of building you may make. If you are building for a child, or with a child, who wants to use the tower, castle or hall, you will probably need to make it with an open space, into which he can place the dramatis personæ of his game. If, however, it is a city you are building, and the characters are going to move about among the edifices, instead of inside them, or if you are merely aiming at an artistic result and not expecting any actual play to be performed upon the scene you have created, then you need not worry about dummy doors, and solid blocks into which there is no real entrance. Both types of building are fascinating and you can always combine them.

In speaking of bricks I mentioned the desirability of some large bricks, and you certainly need some for your magic city. It is a good plan to save empty cartons and cover

them with brown paper. They make splendid blocks which give a look of solidity and strength to your city. If you can make them dark in colour so much the better—a city where most things are pale or colourless looks poor and uninteresting. Bridges, arches and columns are of such value in giving an air of distinction that I long ago set to work to make some out of cardboard. It is astonishing, when once you start, how readily ideas come to you. You will see in many of the odd things you usually throw away, such as empty cartons, reels, or bits of silver paper, new possibilities. Ornaments like the Indian elephant, which nearly every house possesses now-a-days, the Chinese mandarin, the brass bowl, even the kitchen utensils, will assume a new value in your mind. Bowls of various kinds are useful for domes and a minaret can be made by placing a chessman on top. Dominoes and coloured counters will make mosaics.

E. Nesbit tells of an adult party, where the hostess set her guests building and allowed them the run of the house to pick suitable objects. Some guests, I believe, used to rise early in order to secure a treasure which they had realised would be useful. Children will be even more keen and quite as original. They will find in their reading suitable names. The names given to the various structures are of first-class importance, and deserve thought. In *Wings and the Child*, the author has a fine selection, including "The Astrologer's Tower," "The Hall of

Pearl and Red," "The Palace of Cats," "The Tomb in the Desert." No doubt your own imagination or that of the child will suggest others, and those you think of yourselves are always best, just as those buildings you erect yourselves and those materials you find, make, or invent yourselves, are always best. Children will enjoy the making of their playthings, and this leads me to point out how desirable it is that when possible a child should be supplied with materials rather than with the finished article. It is what I have been saying all along, about the bricks and dolls, the sand and the models. The child will appreciate a stuffed animal made by you in his presence, or a boat, whether paper or wood, formed under your hands. He will probably set to work to copy you and make one himself—a consummation at which you should be continually aiming. The question of tools, of course, arises, and should arise early. Fingers unaided can do much, but fingers must learn to manipulate tools.

The pencil must first be mentioned. What a pity it is people don't get their children to draw earlier. If you frequently draw for baby when you are talking to him he will soon try for himself. Anyway let him have a pencil. At first he will make weird hieroglyphics, and he will say they are men or horses, but he is learning to hold the pencil in such a way that it will mark, and to control his hand as it makes the necessary movements. It will not be long before he makes a figure that you or any one will

know is meant for a man. Example counts for such a lot. The brush and crayon and chalk belong to the same category. Every child loves to weave, and should have a weaving needle. It is quite easy to make the paper mats for him, also he and she will like to sew. At first they can stitch pictures on cards, then they can really sew. Various branches of fancy needlework will follow, at least in the case of a girl. A hammer, a saw, and a knife must be provided, and all children need a pot of paste and a brush. Paper dolls, which are a real joy to any one who knows how to play with them, and indeed paper toys of all kinds as well as paper modelling (both maché and card), cannot thrive without paste and scissors. Modelling with moist paper—newspaper is very suitable—is easy and successful. A child of six can make a relief map of an imaginary country, showing hills, vales, rivers, lakes, capes, etc., etc., and, if on a large scale, he can add to it twigs, sand, etc., and make a realistic landscape. Older children can make relief maps to illustrate their geography and paint them in suitable colours. Paste made of starch is clean and wholesome and very successful.

I have not said anything about table games, such as draughts and cards, nor do I intend to say much. Many of these are very good. My chief remark is one of warning, serious warning. Do not encourage games of chance. All games where winning depends upon the throwing of dice should be despised by an intellectual being,

and you want your child to believe in the value of intelligence. Teach him that if he wins such a game as ludo, or any of the multitude of dice games always on the market, there is very little, if any, credit due to him. He has not really done anything more clever than those who have lost. (Whether it is natural to a child to play such games I cannot say. Maybe he is so accustomed to find things working in a way outside his control that he doesn't feel any unfairness when some one else is successful, and he fails through no fault of his own. Perhaps he doesn't realise that his rival is not any more clever than he is himself.) You will never succeed in teaching him the eternal principles of justice and law until you let him see that these games are not for sensible, fair-minded people. Let him know that you despise such brainless, undignified occupations as unworthy of a child of God.

CHAPTER IV

The Child and his Lessons

NOWADAYS there is a tendency to make school life so like playtime that some fear lest we are making things too easy for the child. I am told that in some districts where Montessori methods are applied the parents think the teachers are, as they say, "too soft" with the children. This is no doubt due to the fact that such people do not understand our point of view as regards the child, but there are others who hold similar views for different reasons. They feel that if the child has no battle for his knowledge, if he does not come up against any difficulty, he will lack that quality of character which we call grit. They remind us that the information which we have acquired with pain and trouble is most easily retained. They make us think of the custom of whipping boys at the boundary in order to impress upon them where the boundary was situated. As a matter of fact, the modern educationalist does not seek to eliminate the difficulties inherent in a subject, rather does he seek to stimulate the child to overcome them, but he does endeavour to remove

all artificial pains and penalties by removing the need for them. Arithmetical tables may be remembered because of the stick with which they were taught, but they are equally sure to be remembered without the stick if the child goes to the trouble of working out the tables himself (especially if there is movement and muscular activity connected with his discovery). Children love a difficulty if they can surmount it, and the joy of working out his sums all on his own is quite enough to stamp a boy's character with the sense of a battle won, even if he has enjoyed doing the sum. (Noël, aged eleven, is keen to know more arithmetic. He spent a long time when he might have been playing inquiring about fractions—vulgar and decimal.) There is no need to make or insist on artificial difficulties. All children love puzzles and will naturally delight in solving them. As for lazy children, the stimulus of their more energetic comrades and the desire to get on to fresh work are generally sufficient goad.

The child, then, is viewed by the modern educationalist as desiring to learn if only the right environment and the right atmosphere are provided. What can be done in the home, where education really begins, has been sketched in a general way, but quite a lot of detailed work, usually called lessons, can be done. The distinction between play and work need not be emphasised ; indeed, one is inclined to think it rather an artificial and a very harmful and foolish distinction even in adult life. If you think of

the energy, the time, the strenuous mental effort, and the consequent fatigue of much of our so-called play, you begin to wonder wherein it is different from work. Some have thought that a good education could be given by play alone. Brinton said, "The measure of value of work is the amount of play there is in it, and the measure of value of play is the amount of work there is in it." Certain it is that with suitable playthings, pictures and books, a child can be led on to read by the time he is five. When you think what a help it is to read, and how much enlightenment rapidly follows the acquiring of this art, you realise that the sooner a beginning is made the better. In any case, the child can be accustomed to books from the beginning. We need to see that they are good books. Good poetry appeals to the children, and good prose too. Read it often to them so that they become familiar with words and phrases. A love of literature may be engendered early. The Bible and Shakespeare are the purest English we have and should be made familiar to all.

I have known children of seven and eight delighted to learn gems of verse from a block calendar, and wanting to know the piece from which the quotation is taken. Longfellow, Shakespeare, R. L. Stevenson are among the favourites. The value of an album for the collection of verses is very great.

The practice of silent reading, so recently taken up in our schools, is one we do well to

foster; it encourages the right attitude to books and trains the child in quiet concentration as well as forms habits of reading and self-amusement. When we realise how few people there are who ever read books, and how few of those who do read ever read anything really worth while, we cannot help but feel that there has been something wrong with the teaching of reading in the past. A good deal can be done to remedy this state of things by those who have influence outside school hours, and who can assist the modern teacher by providing the child with a good supply of books, and by accustoming him to talk about his reading. The child should be encouraged to avail himself of the library at school. As Hall points out in *Adolescence,* for the cultivation of English the importance of conversation should not be overlooked, and especially of conversation on subjects other than the concrete and material. We must try and get our children away from the tyranny of things into the realms of the spiritual and the unseen, if we would really develop in them a true sense of the value of literature, of language, and of life. Many people to-day rarely talk for longer than five minutes on any subject that can be called intellectual, and still more rarely on subjects connected with religion or spiritual life. Because such people are so occupied with the material and sensuous they never cultivate either the vocabulary or the ideas of any other realm of thought. The little child's language is necessarily and naturally much concerned

with the objects around him, but as he develops and as he begins to read and to think in a more abstract way his vocabulary should widen, and thought and imagination find words to express themselves. It is here that books are so suitable as topics of conversation, and conversation in its turn will stimulate that capacity for quiet thought and meditation on intellectual themes which is so bound up with religion. The child will have a chance to cultivate his originality, and will be more ready in composition and in versification (not to put it on the high level of real literary productions).

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THE FAIRIES

In the glades of the wood at midnight
  Fairies you may see,
Fairy men and maidens,
  Dancing round the old oak tree.

The elfin band is playing,
  And the fairies dance about
To the beating of the elfin drum,
  And they start to laugh and shout.

THE EARTH

The moon, the moon,
It shines in the gloom,
All over the sea,
He's looking at me.
Beautiful moon. Beautiful moon.

The light shines down from the lighthouse top
To stop the ships from getting on rock,
Beautiful light. Beautiful light.

These verses were written in playtime by a child of eight.

With regard to the formal lessons of writing and arithmetic, it may seem to many child lovers that these should be confined to the schoolroom, but I am sure it is a mistake to shut any subject out of the home life of the child. To take it for granted that a child will feel that certain things are done with when he comes out of school, is to do both him and the teacher a serious wrong. It is to sow the seeds of opposition which will eventually grow up and choke the fruits of the education you are trying to give him. No wonder young people have often thought that education is finished when they leave school. *They* have finished with education, and the result is the same. They leave all the useless, unpractical learning behind, with their school days. But they would not feel like this if, at the various stages, their school knowledge had been utilised at home. If we sometimes ask the child to help us in working out the quantity for a new linoleum, the cost of wire netting for the hen-run, if we encourage him to make calculations in his games and help him to draw plans to scale for his models, he will not only enjoy his lessons more, but he will see that they are really connected with life. The teacher is hampered because he has always to be making up sums, he works all the time on imaginary conditions and we are the people who can supply exactly what the child really needs to make him feel that the thing is worth while. (This is often attempted in schools with success, but the home arithmetic

is needed too, because it helps to make life a unity for the child.)

In the same way there are many opportunities for the exercise of writing at home. Children love to write out shopping lists or invitations, and will often write tickets or notices for us. They do these things in their games, if they are supplied with the necessary materials. In addition, every child should be encouraged to write letters on occasion. The opportunity of instructing him in polite usage in this respect should not be missed. Acceptances and acknowledgments should be insisted upon. The child will find pleasure in his newly acquired art if encouraged to practise. The copying out of a verse or story in a careful hand is a welcome exercise to a child, especially if the piece be original. The home magazine is an institution to be fostered.

Other lessons, like science, needlework, geography and history, when well taught, have also an obvious connection with life, but even here we shall do well to keep alive the interest which is aroused by a good teacher. "Literature and history," says Hall, of Clarke University, "should teach moral experience by proxy," and if we desire to see the lessons of the past go home we shall not leave them to a dumb child, but we shall discuss them with him as also we shall discuss geography and science on our walks, in the garden, and at our table, so that we may establish a bond between what the child learns at home, in Church, in Sunday

School, and what he learns at school. Thus we shall enable him to interpret life in terms of religion, or at all events in terms of home and family affections, which is not very different. Knowledge of all kinds will be dearly associated with love, happiness, and reality. This association is very important. Just as the interest of the parents in the home-lessons of a child helps to make a bridge between the school and home, and to unify the divided life of the child, so the binding together of secular and sacred and tender experiences helps to strengthen religious belief, and to make life precious from every point of view.

Now it may appear as if in our zeal to develop the mental powers of the child, and to make his intellectual activity enter into all departments of his life that we are forgetting the importance of physical development. I do not think, however, that it is bookishness or intellectual interests that need be feared. It is probably true that "Civilisation is hard upon muscular development," but it is the civilisation which travels about in motor-cars, when it ought to walk, and fails to appreciate the simpler joys of an active life because it has sufficient wealth to avoid them. It is not the civilisation bred of the kind of education I have been describing, for the child is to be led all the time to acquire his culture by means of muscular activity. To quote Hall again, "No culture is complete which does not issue in motor habits." We must never forget the importance

of expression to the child who is learning. Let him learn to make things, to draw things, to dramatise things. Let his presents be things he has himself made. His own self is in the work he does more than in anything else. The labour of his hands is his own in a sense that nothing else is. The unpleasing adult valuation of presents at their monetary value will not occur to a child reared on these principles. It is labour that is valuable and only labour. Let us teach the child that we see behind and within the present he gives us his love and sacrifice, and that we feel he is giving us a bit of his heart when he makes his offering. Of course there are selfish people who will not take this view, but who want a gift because it is good, perfect, useful, satisfying to pride of possession. These people may expect to have materially-minded children.

The responsibility of selecting what subjects a child shall learn and what he shall omit devolves upon his guardians at some stage in his career, and so a small space must now be given to the discussion of this time-worn topic. At the ordinary primary school the selection of subjects is determined by experts, and is a more or less fixed minimum of really necessary subjects (what we might call basic subjects). Then there early arises the question of music. It seems desirable that, wherever possible, lessons in music should be provided for the child. The benefits he will receive, quite apart from the possible development of special talent, will,

in most cases, greatly exceed the manipulatory powers he acquires on the instrument selected. The training in ear rhythm, and musical appreciation, not to mention the sheer joy which most people find in music, will give to the incidental discipline involved in practising and in the overcoming of difficulties a value which we can ill afford to miss. Rhythm and dancing attract the child.

Music should not be the only art acquired during the early years, though to the child much of the work involved may sometimes seem drudgery. Fortunately this aspect of many subjects is now minimised. Languages taught on the direct method, or on a combination of that with older methods, are not so dreary and formal grammar is not quite such a bugbear as it used to be. Drawing, painting, and modelling will help to make other lessons interesting as well as constitute a subject in themselves. History should be fair and give credit to other nations than our own, while at the same time teaching the child to be proud of the empire which has contributed so much to the welfare of nations. Militarism lives largely on perversions of history. The glorification of war and the ignoring of the victories of peace, the hero-worship of generals and the omission of great reformers will never help the League of Nations. Public opinion must speak out on these themes in the interest, not only of the child, but also of future generations. The teaching of science in our schools is essential if

we would have our children fitted to face life with interest and with ability. An elementary knowledge of physics and chemistry is to my mind necessary for a rational existence—some knowledge of sound, light, and heat. No thinking person can really enjoy life who knows nothing of these sciences. The same thing applies to botany, which might perhaps be made to include the other two. Further, all geography should cover some teaching in physiography and a little astronomy. By making one subject include these as phases, one does not really lengthen the curriculum. As to cookery, needlework, and domestic economy, I would insist on them all up to at least fourteen years of age (for girls). This curriculum is not too crowded. It has been done, and that without regular homework.

It is sometimes urged that it is good for a child that he should go away to boarding-school, and learn by bitter experience the art of independence. It is felt that the influences of home are too soft and effeminate, and that roughing things with other children in large numbers will be good for him. No doubt there are parents who are not fitted to train and influence children, but there are not many who do not want to guide them and to form their characters. Most of us want our children to grow up something like ourselves, or at any rate like our ideals of them. We would rather they bore the impress of our character and our teaching than of any other character or teaching. We make this

very difficult and certainly weaken our chances of moulding their lives if we send them away for long periods, periods which are filled with association with adults whose chief aim is often to get the child through his examinations, to whom the character of the child, even if they realise its importance, is apt to come second, who do not know the individual peculiarities of the child or his hereditary tendencies, what to guard, what to avoid, etc. Moreover, is there not something in the idea of parental responsibility in the matter of training children ? Surely, to send the child to others to be dominated by their influences is not merely to forgo the privileges of parenthood, it is also to shirk the responsibilities.

We may also ask whether the unnatural conditions of boarding-school life are likely to benefit the child. We know most children dislike them, and this very fact places the parent in an undesirable position. He is strongly tempted to try and make up to the child in his vacations for the rigours of school life by extra tenderness, leniency, and general spoiling. This happens quite as much among those people who tell us that hardness and discipline, roughing it and plain food with regularity are so good for the child. I am inclined to agree that many of these things are good for him, but I would say, "Let him have them at home, consistently and regularly." If they are good for him, why lead him to think that he is being harshly treated at school as you do when you give him luxuries

and relaxation in the holidays? Many feel that it increases a child's appreciation of his home, and the kindness of his parents, when he is made to endure hardship and to miss the home atmosphere for a time. What an indictment of their home! It needs to be set up against something unpleasant and distasteful in order that its benefits may be appreciated! What an unfair judgment of the child too! Can he not realise what love is without this ruthless and unnatural alternative? I do not for a minute suggest that boarding-schools are the places of horror that they were in the days of Charlotte Brontë, but I am taking the attitude of those who say that it is good for a child to experience artificially the absence of home. It is certainly a cheap way of making home attractive, but it is a rather negative way and, moreover, it assumes that home is something provided for the child, something in which he has no formative influence. Another real difficulty of the boarding-school, and one which our best boarding-schools have nobly sought to minimise, is the loss to the child of a sense of individuality. He becomes much more one of a herd, one soldier in a barracks, when he joins a boarding-school, than he does even in the ordinary school. He is unable to bring any very different contribution to his class than any other boy in the school can bring. The division into "houses" adopted in our best schools obviates this to a very small extent and even that is valuable; it removes some of the levelling

tendencies and gives vigour and originality to sections of the school life.

One feature of boarding-school life is to my mind very undesirable, and that is the herding together of children of one sex, and the reduction of the number of adults with whom they come in contact. Normally a child would associate with two or three children of different ages from himself, and with two or three adults, of different sexes. I am a firm believer in the home as a sacred institution and I think home life is the birthright of every child and of all young people, and of all adults too. This is not to suggest that the members of a family are never to go away from their home, but it does mean that those influences which will count with them when they are absent, shall be those of the home. It may seem that the arguments I have adduced against boarding-schools hold good also against schools in general. But it is not to be denied that for purposes of tuition, training in arts and crafts and the acquiring of learning, specially qualified teachers are necessary. Not all parents are able to give lessons in any technical form, indeed very few are, and while the parent may be responsible for the moral training of his child he is justified in sending him to an expert so that he may develop easily his powers of hand and brain. The moral responsibility of the parent demands that the teacher selected should be of a high type. I would always encourage parents to cultivate the friendship of the teacher. In many schools a spirit of co-operation is fostered

by Mothers' Clubs, Parents' Days, School Displays and Exhibitions of work.

In our day-schools the problem of the unnatural herding together of children of one sex can be obviated by co-education. This is rarely adopted in boarding schools, though I have known a few successful ones. Boys and girls artificially separated develop all kinds of false notions of each other, and, quite as important, false notions of the relations between the sexes. In the home the mutual give and take of everyday life, the raillery which must be taken in good part, play a large part in forming the character of our boys and girls. The interplay of one nature on another, and the insight gained into the feminine or masculine mind is too valuable to be missed. Moreover, there is a certain stimulus, which is interpreted by some people as a strain on the girl, but which need not be so, in learning lessons together. Both boys and girls do benefit from the contributions brought by the opposite sex to the class work. To the critics who urge that girls become tom-boys and boys too soft under this arrangement, I would answer that girls gain vigour and independence of thought and boys learn to be gentle, thorough, and hardworking. As to the idea that sex morality is bound to suffer, I entirely disagree. Boys and girls brought up together and familiar with each other's weaknesses are less likely to develop silly notions of love-making at a premature stage than boys and girls who are artificially separated and who

imagine all kinds of foolish and wrong things about the other sex. Moreover, it is well known that boys and girls who work together and play together can treat each other as comrades up to a later age than those who meet rarely and only under artificial conditions. That the boys and girls will corrupt each other I do not for a moment believe. Wise supervision, a high moral tone, and *the influence of the home whence the children come* have a much better chance of preventing this in a day-school than they have in a boarding-school.

My last point about the child and his lessons will refer to examinations. The present-day system has much to commend it in that it makes for equality of testing, and as far as possible of marking. It is as it were guaranteed to be all right, and outside people, employers, and educational bodies can accept the results as a kind of hall mark of a certain kind of proficiency. It is easy to attack the whole system of examinations, and to point out that clever children often fail through want of nerve or lack of time, and that smart children who may not have the knowledge, but who have the confidence, may either by bluff, or by a clever presentation of what little they do know, pass. We know there is a certain amount of so-called luck about exams. The questions set may suit one candidate better than another who is equally able, and so on. But this remains that many of the difficulties can be minimised if not actually cut out by wise arrangements, and so far nothing

has been devised to take the place of the examination. What I do feel is that, instead of making a fetish of the outside examination, we should encourage the schools to set their own mark on the child's work. A good school would have its own reputation to consider, and when tempted to give a child a leaving certificate would have to consider the value to be attached to the certificate outside. It would soon become known which school had the highest standards, and the world without would value a certificate according to which school it came from. The teachers in a school are more likely to know a child's real ability, and can always take into account his work during the year or years previous to his leaving. They could give a much fairer mark than an outside examiner who only sees one paper done under highly trying conditions. So do not let us attach too much importance to these public examinations.

CHAPTER V

The Child and Sex

WHEN specialists get to work on any subject it always tends to assume unwonted proportions. One might think from the attention given to the question of sex that it dominated a large part of life, as indeed some of the New Psychologists say it does. They declare it to be all supreme even in our sleeping hours. As a matter of fact, if we consider ourselves without prejudice we shall probably discover that during a great part of our life sex has played little or no part, especially during our earlier years, and even during those periods, when we were conscious of sex as a factor in our existence, its influence was not continuous. Much of our work, much of our enjoyment, much of thought was entirely independent of sex, and still is. It is true that sex counts in life and should count for beauty and spiritual understanding, but it is often forgotten and cannot claim our undivided attention, either as an interest in life or as a subject of study.

How far the little child is moulded and

guided by sex is difficult to say. Personally, I think the idea that little girls favour their fathers and boys their mothers, because there is some sex attraction, is foolish, though I think there may in some cases be something of this attraction in the feelings of the father and mother, unpleasing as the idea is to me. Children seem to treat one another alike, boys and girls, and to feel no different in each other's presence until they are well past nursery stage. The precocious child, who has heard or seen love-making, may begin before he is eight to imitate the attitude which he thinks was intended, but there is very little reality in his behaviour, very little consciousness of sex. Later he will begin to laugh at the idea of a sweetheart, but even then the idea is probably one of showing off, or having fun rather than any real development of sex attraction. Adults should avoid foolish jesting with little children on the subject of sweethearts. The child is prone to say things he scarcely understands himself, because he finds grown-ups are amused at them, but there gradually develops the consciousness of a difference between his feelings towards his companions of his own sex and those of the other sex. He passes through a period of indifference or hostility and afterwards begins to be really interested, and conscious of himself as a sexual being. I suppose there follows the period of maximum interest in this side of life, but even now the youth does not think exclusively along lines suggested by sex ; he is not dominated all

the time by sex. In later years other powers and influences will compete with sex as a ruling factor in his life, and so I do think we need to beware, in dealing both with the adult and with the child, lest we over-rate the importance of sex. At the same time I doubt very much if we can over-estimate the importance of right instruction for the child in matters relating to sex. Before dealing with the subject of instruction I must point out the elementary necessity of good habits, *e.g.* early rising, cleanliness, and the value of fresh air and suitable clothing. Hobbies, especially those involving manual work, should always be cultivated.

Much prominence has been given lately to the subject of the instruction of the child in matters of sex, and the old policy of silence has been, if not completely routed, at least seriously attacked. The very attack has in itself constituted a momentous blow to the old policy, for it was always understood that these matters should never be discussed, and to question this unspoken dictum was almost as wrong as to break it. Now, however, that the ice is broken it behoves us to be rational, and to face the question from a view-point that is not merely sentimental. The reader is referred to the Copec Commission Report on the Relation of the Sexes.

We might begin by saying, "Why was silence enjoined? Was it due to prudery? Was it due to fears lest knowledge would lead to wickedness? Was it due to a wrong idea of

the whole subject in the mind of the adult ? " No doubt all these had a part in dictating a policy of silence. Once accepted as the rule, the next question arose, " What shall we say ? How shall we cover our silence ? " The answers were various. Some resorted to jokes, not always clean, some to innuendo, some to lies, and some to procrastination. But all knew that the child would somehow find out elsewhere. Indeed they depended on his finding out elsewhere. As ideas on this subject have developed, books have appeared :—some overstating their case, some over-emphasising the duty of thought and study in matters of sex, some good, relating the question to religion and without disproportionate and extravagant statements. Practically all these books were written for adults, and none for little children, but more recently some fine attempts have been made to cater for young boys and girls. Edith Howe's *The Sun's Babies* and *The Cradle Ship* are very good, but should not be swallowed at a gulp, so to speak. It tends to keep matters continually before the mind of the child if one is frequently speaking or reading of them : he will imagine that these things are much more prominent in life than they are (or than they should be) and will give them a preponderance in his thought and activities which is quite out of proportion with the normal child life. To a child the sex interest is just spasmodic. It is aroused only by some new experience and does not need instruction at all times and seasons.

It is a big mistake to give him the impression that it is a dominating interest.

Apart from books and formal instruction (and this subject is best kept away from formal instruction), the question arises what information shall be given to the child, when shall it be given, by whom, and in what way.

Firstly, I would say information given to the child must be true. Don't give him false science in this any more than in any connection. Let it be all that is necessary for a simple explanation but no more than is necessary. Tell him plainly so that he is satisfied with what you say.

Secondly, choose the right time. Be led by the child in this as far as possible. When his first question arises answer him without evasion. If the occasion be unsuitable (*e.g.* if there are other people present) appoint a time when you can be undisturbed and quiet, but I would insist that you avoid making the child think that there is something special about the information you are going to give him. It is a mistake to have him kept waiting with his eyes so to speak on the clock until the moment arrives when he is to have the great revelation made. "I'll tell you another time" will be quite enough to say. And later, "Oh, you know you asked me so and so, well——" Then you can give him the necessary information. I do believe in being casual, or rather appearing casual, with the child. If you make a "set at him" or speak in a formal and very evidently

preconsidered manner with a child, you make him self-conscious, difficult and unnatural at once. You are trying to convince him that something is perfectly natural and simple but you surround it with all the awe and solemnity of a terrible mystery, and so defeat your own object. I do not mean that these questions should be treated lightly, far from it, but we must realise that to the child everything is wonderful, strange and new, and that the special teaching we have to give is only like everything else when he first meets it. We must take seriously all his inquiries after knowledge, this among the rest. The difficulty then arises how shall we make him understand that he is not to talk in public about these things? Convention demands it and, outside medical and scientific circles, it is desirable that these canons of good taste should be followed. It need not be a difficult matter to make the child realise that these departments of life are sacred and that, therefore, they can only be mentioned among those most intimately connected with him.

This brings me to my third question—How shall we tell the child? Very many good authorities advocate leading up to the question from a study of plant life, and this would seem very natural and easy. Of course, it would be really suitable in a case where a child was doing a course of botany or nature-study, but it would be a more or less artificial method with a child who was not accustomed to study plant life. He would be surprised at the strange lesson

and the very novelty of the subject would stir in his mind just those suspicions of a special and abnormal experience which we want to avoid. Whether this course is adopted or not we should remember, I think, that formal instruction is not what is desired. To give a detailed comparison or a long explanation is to rob the opportunity of its promise. It were better to devote one's attention to the flower until the process is fully understood, and then suggest that life in general is the result of the feeding of one seed with another. To my mind, this, good though it is, is incomplete without some references to the great and wonderful Power Who makes these things possible. In short, I would present my information under the ægis of religion as well as under that of nature-study. Of course any really religious person feels the presence of God in the processes of nature, but there are many religious people who fail to recognise Him in this special function of reproduction on the human plane.

Like so many other things, sex cannot occupy a middle position; if it is not exalted to the highest levels it sinks to the lowest. Therefore, I would urge upon all who have the care of little children to see to it that sex is intimately connected in their minds with God and religion. This will ensure silence before strangers, and the right atmosphere whenever the subject is raised. As far as it is possible to secure purity of thought and act this should secure them.

As to the question, "Who shall inform the

child ? " I would say that it is the privilege and duty of the parents to instruct their children, and in most cases (the mother will have the best opportunities.) When this duty is not undertaken by the parents it seems to me to fall to the work of the Church, most naturally, on account of its religious significance. Individual talks or treatment in small groups would seem the best substitute, and we have to remember that in most cases, where the parents have failed to recognise their duty in this matter, (the children are not ignorant :) what they need is not so much information as correction. They need the religious background or interpretation for their knowledge, which is usually of the half-true kind, and usually mixed up with a good deal of obscenity and silly filthy humour. As we know, many of us, the question is not " Shall children be told about sex ? " It is the question, " Shall they be told by the right people and in the right way the real truth, or shall they learn a partial and distorted truth associated with dirty stories and horrid innuendoes from some chance companion ? " If they do the latter, which they are almost sure to do unless fortified by true knowledge, they will do it in secret, and we shall hear nothing about what is going on. The child realises when his parents put off his early questions with fictions or evasions that it is no use talking to the intimate home circle, and he probably forms the opinion that the whole matter is not fit to be talked of by decent people at all. Yet he is impelled by his very nature

to discuss it, and as forbidden fruit it acquires a new attractiveness. These ideas tend to persist as we can see by the unhealthy interest taken in those cinema pictures, novels, jokes, and dramas which thrive on them among adults. So sex comes to be associated with all that is low, indecent, and ribald, and rarely if ever with the sacred and beautiful, the revered and religious, in the minds of multitudes of men and women. The only sure and safe way to prevent this catastrophe for our children and the future generations is to put the whole subject on the high level where it ought to be, to associate it with the Creator of life and to reverence it as His Work, and at the same time to seek to develop those traits of character and will which strengthen and enhearten in times of temptation and depression. Where self-control, sacrifice, knowledge and reverence go hand in hand, there is little to be feared in this or any department of child life.

CHAPTER VI

The Child and Religion

THE problem of the child's religious life arises as a rule when those who control him seek to bring him into contact with organised religion. It is when the child begins to go to Church and is inclined to rebel against the strange experience that a problem begins to arise. The same trouble, in a slightly different form, occurs when the child is transferred from the congenial sphere of the kindergarten to the junior and senior departments of the Sunday School. We find very often that it is a severe discipline to the child to have to attend these institutions; it is so severe that in very many cases the parents fail to enforce it, and the child drifts away from organised religion altogether. Especially does this happen in those cases where the parents, while wishing their children to attend Church and Sunday School, are themselves negligent of the opportunities provided. The difficulty we faced in an earlier chapter of moulding the child by convention without ruining his natural development arises in connection with our custom of Sunday observance. Happily for the child the

tyranny of the old conventional Sunday is largely broken, and yet there are few of us who would care to have our children entirely neglectful of Sunday as a special day. We may be inclined to humour them with a certain laxity, or to allow them more liberty than we were allowed, but we do not want them to behave on Sundays exactly as they do on other days. Very often I fear we do not know exactly what we do want them to be and do, and we get what such indecision deserves. We know we want them to be quiet and to leave us undisturbed, and we also know that if they are left without any occupation they will not do either of these things. In many households Sunday has been the day of greatest naughtiness. It has been the day when frocks have been torn, hats, toys, furniture, and commands broken, and there have been more bruises and more tears, all because the unemployed children have had to seek employment in mischief. To seek to improve this state of affairs by allowing the child his normal occupations, or some of them, is only half-way to solving the difficulty; besides it is an acknowledgment of weakness.

The solution of the problem is not so easily reached. We shall need to find out what religion is to the child, and whether it is possible for him to appreciate anything of a really spiritual nature (*cf.* Prin. Garvie, *O.T.* in *S.S.*). Montessori has proved that those child-lovers who urge that it is cruel to keep a young child sitting still, are mistaken, and I think she has

also demonstrated that the child is capable of at any rate the beginnings of religious meditation. (As a child I was made to sit for over an hour on Sunday mornings in silence, which was generally only broken by brief sermons or prayers which did not interest me, but I learned to sit still and I learned to do quiet thinking.) What a child really feels about God is very difficult to say. No doubt there is a good deal of superstition and crudity in his mind. There is a good deal of these elements in our minds. We feel it very difficult to apprehend the nature of God, and we are glad to avail ourselves of metaphors and parables in our attempts to get a clearer knowledge. The child certainly does seem capable of a very real and strong belief in the existence of a beneficent power overruling all things. We might almost say he takes it for granted that there is a purpose behind the universe and that that purpose is a beneficent one (*e.g.* the child of three mentioned above who, disappointed because unable to see a train which he could hear, asked, "Did God put the hill in front of the train for fun?" and his older brother who was once overheard asking him, "Tell us what you saw in that other world before you were born? Did you see any dead persons?" This was at seven years old). So the child has some element of religion in his make up. I think he is very conscious of God as present in creation and I think his sense of the beauty and, more especially, of the wonder of nature is closely connected with this con-

sciousness. As Garvie points out, the child is sensitive to divinity in twilight quiet, lofty trees and mountains, sunsets, birds and insects. Has the child any further religious intuitions? He presumably has a conscience. A two-year-old infant who denied having dropped his spoon was humorously asked, "Where's your conscience?" He replied with some degree of truth and finding the strange word difficult to articulate, "I haven't got a conscience." It may not work like an adult conscience, which is trained by intellectual efforts and by experience, as well as modified by the influence of custom, but still it is some sort of guide to the child. He is obedient under its monitions or disobedient in spite of them. What is more he knows when his obedience is right and his disobedience wrong. He may say things which seem to us like lies and be apparently unharassed in conscience, he may steal or misuse things without seeming to be disturbed in the inward monitor, but *if he is really intellectually aware* of any gap between what he did and what we expected of him, his conscience will probably be attacking him, even though that fact may be concealed from us. The point is that he may not conceive of a thing as wrong and therefore his conscience may not condemn him. We may say, then, that the child has some spiritual apprehension and some power of making ethical distinctions—what about his religion as a dynamic? Can he draw on his religion for moral strength? Has it any resources of power

for him ? In the best and truest sense I believe it has, though not perhaps in the sense in which many adults would themselves find strength. I mean that grown-up people sometimes resist temptation by dwelling on thoughts of God and His holiness, of or Christ and His sacrifice ; they find strength in a time of weakness through their religious meditation. But there is a power equally religious and quite as efficacious which the child, who is properly loved and properly guided, relies upon—I mean the power of earthly affection. Because he loves his mother or his baby brother he will devote himself to carrying out their wishes, and his own projects will not appeal to him while their needs are before him. The child can be thoroughly unselfish, not because he is merely made to appear so, not because he is priggish or pious in any silly sense, but because he is dominated by love. To say, as Homer Lane apparently does, that the child should not be anything but selfish, that it is not even desirable that he should forget his own selfish wants, is, to my mind, to do him a great wrong, for I know the child is really capable of sacrificial love, especially of that finest type which is not conscious of any sacrifice, because it is so happy in the giving, because the giver is so thoroughly absorbed in the love that impels him. In spite of our frequent cynicism we have all of us probably seen a child deliberately choose the smaller share. It might sometimes have been done through a sense of what was proper (and let us remember that that

involves an amount of self-control which many grown-ups can ill afford to despise), but we have seen it done so that another might enjoy the larger share. We have probably all seen and noted the generosity of children with their pennies, their sweets, and their turn at the game. The child who said " I wish everybody could have a sugar sandwich " spoke with spontaneous good-will and gratitude for his own meal. We have all heard the story of the little girl carrying her big baby brother (she didn't find him too heavy because he was her brother), and that just illustrates what I mean. We must admit therefore that the child is religious since he has some spiritual basis of belief, some power of ethical judgment and finds in love a motive and a power for right living.

Why then does the child seem so out of his atmosphere in our religious customs and practices? Can we modify these to make them more in accord with his needs or must we try to train and alter him so that he may grow accustomed to our ways and gradually be able to benefit from them? A serious attempt to give the child religious teaching and religious exercises under conditions that appeal to him has been made in the modern Sunday School. The kindergartens have certainly been a great success in bringing religion near to the child. What a pity it is that the upper classes in the Sunday School so often fail to hold the child who has been so splendidly interested and helped in the kindergarten! And yet this problem is

not really only concerned with the child, for nearly every Church is half empty. It is not only the child who does not want religion (or who does not want Church religion), it is also a large proportion of adults. With the latter, at any rate, it would seem that they have ceased to care for religion or religious things of any kind, but with the children we cannot but feel that there is still a possibility of cultivating a religious interpretation of life, and so we ask, What can we do to keep up their interest? Now I think the explanation of their attitude is to be sought not merely in a faulty method in the Sunday School, but much further back, in the home of the child. Just as the child takes his attitude to politics, to big moral issues, and to life generally, from the home circle of influence, so does he reproduce the attitude of his most intimate associates towards religion and religious questions. His unbounded admiration for, and absolute trust in, the intellectual ability and the moral rectitude of his parents lead him to accept their point of view unquestioningly. I heard the following pathetic story recently: it is quite true. A little girl was taken to task by her teacher for using bad language. With the child seated on her knee the teacher endeavoured to make her realise how wrong the habit was. With tears running down her face, in an agony of distress the little one threw her arms round the teacher's neck and pleaded, "But it isn't wrong for mothers to swear, is it?" I do not mean to suggest that the child

never thinks about things. He does, but his thoughts tend to assimilate themselves to those of his parents. When his young companions begin to challenge his opinions, and to state an opposite view, the child comes home asking for further arguments on his side, and bringing the opposition view for refutation. Again I do not mean to suggest the child has no independence or originality. He has, and there is quite a possibility that by dint of argument, reading and thought, he may change his inherited position. Otherwise what good were the work of the educationalists and religious reformers? Still there is a strong bias in favour of his retaining the ideas and outlook of those to whom he looks for guidance. (*See* Copec Report, *op. cit.*, p. 19.) Therefore the religious attitude of the home is all-important from the point of view of the religion of the child. Where the parents are accustomed to sneer at religion, or to ignore its existence as a factor in human life, we can scarcely expect the child to be keen on Church and Sunday School or to find any happiness in the observance of our conventional attempts to induce reverence on the Sunday. In the same way any attempts to teach him to pray will bear only Dead Sea fruit. Many thoughtful and anxious mothers begin baby's little life in an atmosphere of prayer. While he is too young to say any prayer himself, such a mother will pray aloud over his cot, and as early as possible teach him to repeat the words after her, but he does not really learn to pray

unless he sometimes sees and hears, or at all events knows about, his mother's own prayers.

Unless there is a prayerful atmosphere in the home, unless the spirit if not the rite of family prayers is dominant, we are foolish to expect the child to have any real belief in the value of prayer, Sunday observance, or Church attendance. Many people expect the Sunday School, especially in view of its wonderful modern methods, to supply all the religious needs and training of the child. They often realise that some teaching and some training are desirable, but fail to see that, if these are isolated from the rest of the child's life, they will inevitably result in the conception that religion is a thing for Sundays, or for parts of Sunday. Such religion is useless, helpless, and hopeless, but it is very common in these days. If life is a divided thing it loses much of its joy and much of its possibility. As I pointed out in discussing "The Child and his Lessons," it is desirable to give a sense of unity between home and school life. One of the justifications for home-lessons lies in their power to do this. Division is weakness for both the divided interests, as well for the life as a whole. This applies more in the sphere of religion than in any other. A man may live comfortably and fairly satisfactorily without being able to discuss his business interests, his life's work, or his other undertakings at home; he merely feels that the two things can run along in more or less separate channels only finding a unity

in that they are both the interest of one man's life. They can exist like parallel lines in his life, but it is different with religion. Unless religion finds expression in all departments of life, home, business, sport and pleasure, it will not run along any channel: it will dry up. What we must do, if we would make the child's religion a living force and a permanent power in his life, is to unify his religious interests and ideas with the rest of his thoughts and activities. Prayer must not belong to bedtime only, nor must it be for the child only. The home must be a praying home, and the school a praying school. Religion must not be told off for Sunday duty, nor the rites of religious observance reserved for Church and Sunday School.

The same applies to missionary interests. The Bible must be used in the home, its stories and teaching must not be left to the minister or Sunday School teacher. The child should not be discouraged from asking questions about the Biblical discrepancies and difficulties. Parents are afraid to face these sometimes, but the child asks in all good faith, and the parent who really cares that his child should retain his simple beliefs will find it well worth while to study these problems. A good deal of faulty training of children, as in other departments, arises from sheer laziness on the part of parents. Sometimes it is physical laziness, as when parents never play with their children, or never instruct them, or fail to keep them suitably employed on Sunday, and sometimes it is

intellectual laziness, as when people will not trouble to explain a difficult matter to a child. We ought to feel it a challenge when a child asks us for the meaning of some strange story, or for the explanation of some new phenomenon. It should be possible, if we really know him, and if we know the required information, to give him a satisfactory answer. If we do not know the answer his question should stir us to seek it. Laziness is always a contemptible thing, but when it prevents a little child getting his due it is most contemptible of all. If we set ourselves to make Sunday a day of real religious happiness for the child, a day on which he shall have special opportunities for exercising and developing the simple thoughts and meditative faculties of his natural religious instincts, surely we could do so. It would mean less haphazard methods of Sunday discipline, more thought, more planning, and probably more time spent with the child than many parents give, but it would be successful.

When we enter into the child's Sunday and make the day a unity for him, we shall find ourselves entering in the same spirit into the everyday religious life of the child. We shall be able to talk of religious matters at any time. The talk at the family table will include references to the sermon, points from the children's address will be quoted in letters or sketched in drawings, even the children's games will bear the influence of the Scripture characters of the moment. I am not suggesting that all day, every day, we

should be impressing upon the child by word of mouth the teaching he has heard, but I do suggest that any day, at any time, such teaching may be recalled both by the child and by us. Just as, when we have been to see a play with any one we know well, we constantly quote apt passages and smile a signal of recognition when something happens to recall an incident afterwards, so, having spent Sunday with the child, having shared his experiences in Church and Sunday School, we find a new bond of interest between us, the important difference being that religion is a thread all through life, and that analogies and comparisons, illustrations and examples, are not merely frequent, they are continually appearing, they are enacted in everything that goes on around us. And when the child comes to say his prayer at night, the story he has heard and the teaching he has received will make it a real prayer. He will pray with real fervour because he feels that we are with him in his religious faith. He knows that we believe in prayer too.

I would always give a child scope for original prayer and encourage him to formulate his petitions himself. I used to find it somewhat of a tax on my time, as well as on my energy, to stand and listen while the child deliberated on his relations. Noël used to indulge in lists of all the people he loved and often interspersed them with comments. Then some nights I would suggest to him that we had a "thank you" prayer, a suggestion which he readily

understood and accepted. Children like to say their prayers aloud. It gives a proof of your interest and a sense that you are sharing in the prayer. I often repeat the last sentence as my own addition to the child's prayer. Even if the child is only repeating a formal prayer, which he has learned off by heart, he is disappointed when told to say it "inside." The practice of this kind of formal repetition needs careful watching for obvious reasons. While it is well to accustom the child to beauty of phrase and to dignity of expression, it must not be done at the expense of reality. I would never be content with a formal prayer alone.

So much for the modification of the home attitude to religion for the sake of the child. Just a closing paragraph on the child in Church. Personally, I think the child should go to Church and learn to sit through the whole service. I am sure that he will more easily be accustomed to this if the atmosphere of the home is what I have been suggesting, but even so it may be somewhat of a trial to him at first. To delay, on this account, the time of his beginning attendance at Church is merely to put off the battle, and probably to make it more difficult. Use the power of suggestion wisely, beware of hinting that he finds the service tiring, at first stay only for part of the service; if suitable let the child go out to a children's service, make it as easy for him to like Church as you can, remind him that he will have you for a companion at Church. These are suggestions, but

they will scarcely be needed by the parent who has grasped the principles on which the development of the child's religious life depends. My youngest child begged to be taken to Church because all the rest of the family went, and my two elder children generally prefer to remain in Church with me rather than go out to the children's service. I can remember being invited to a children's meeting as a child, but we always preferred to go to the adult gathering with our mother. The solution of the problem lies in the religion of the parent. In that will the religion of the child be fostered.

CHAPTER VII

The Child and his Christ

IN the last chapter I emphasised the vital importance of religion in the home. A child whose parents are religious is far more likely to retain his interest in spiritual things, than a child whose parents only value religion for others or who don't value it at all. Now I want to look at the matter from another angle : I want to suggest that we ought to make a beginning, not with the parents, but with the child. The hope for the future lies in our power to do this. Unless we can win in the heart of the child a place for Jesus Christ, our aspirations and ideals for the future of society are doomed to failure. Harold Copping has depicted this very beautifully for us in his picture, "The Hope of the World." Jesus Christ is our Hope, but it is *Jesus Christ set in the midst of the children.* The efforts that parents may make towards the solution of the world's problems depend for their fulfilment on the spirit of the children who follow them.

A League of Nations may be a grand conception, but unless the rising generation, the youth of the nations, is filled with a spirit of brotherhood it will be little better than the old

schemes of diplomatists with their balance of power and their military obsessions. Treaties will be met with counter-treaties and alliances with counter-alliances. Arbitration courts have been set up before, but could not function on really vital matters: treaties have been made and have become scraps of paper. It is the spirit that is essential: Christ in the midst of the children.

Education is a boon that should be denied to none. It is the moral, as well as the legal, right of every one from childhood, but education without Christ will not produce true culture. Men and women may become more expert in crime: education may merely equip cunning: the power to read, once acquired, may be exercised only on silly novels or on literature of an even more harmful kind: science may become "procuress to the lords of hell." The child must receive Christ if education is to be any real benefit to the human race.

In the world of industry, manual skill and dexterity with machines will not necessarily lead to better work or the cheap provision of greater comforts for the masses. Unless the up-growing generation are enthused with a spirit of Christian brotherhood, work may be done under sweated conditions, as far as the employer is concerned, and in a grudging spirit of unwillingness and rebellion as far as the work-people are concerned.

Therefore, for the sake of human progress Christ must be set in the midst of the children.

There is another vital reason why we must bring the Christ to the child : every child has a right to know his Saviour. The child owes so much to Jesus. Through the ages history reveals a vast improvement in the lot of the child under Christian auspices. From the days of Jesus' life on earth, when the weakness, the dependence and the absolute trust of the child led Jesus to make him the type of the Kindgom, to the present day, with its infant welfare centres, its free kindergartens and children's playgrounds, we may pass, noting on the way a growing recognition of the rights of the child, and, in more recent times, various factory acts, safeguards for child life and happiness. The spirit of Jesus working in the hearts of leaders and reformers, men like Robert Raikes and the Earl of Shaftesbury, Sir John Kirk and many another, led them to befriend the little children of their day, and indeed of all time. The child of to-day owes much to the spirit which inspired Mrs. Browning to write *The Cry of the Children.* We only need to compare the life of the child in heathenism with that in Christian lands to be convinced that Christ has meant everything to our children. The lot of the child in India, the land of the ill-fated child widow, in China, with its foot-binding, in Japan, where industry takes a heavy toll of child life and happiness, and in Africa, with its primitive cruelties and superstitions, is a sad contrast to that of our happy children. Christ belongs by right to the child since the child owes so much to Him.

Then arises the question—How shall we present Christ to the child? Naturally we want to do it in such a way as to make the winsomeness and the love of the Master appeal to the child. It may seem to some that we could scarcely make a mistake here: in Jesus we have such a wonderfully attractive figure, that we feel He must naturally interest and even fascinate the child. This is so true that we need to beware lest we spoil this natural attractiveness by ourselves standing between the child and his Christ. Some children, like many adults, think goodness is dull, that religion means the negation of all that is enjoyable. We must beware of cultivating, or even permitting, such an erroneous idea. We must present Christ in such a way that the child will perceive new and radiant possibilities in life. Life should appear greater and grander because Christ is in it. The element of adventure should be emphasised and Christ related to the idea of conquest. The beauty of the loving, gentle Jesus, the Shepherd with the lamb, will appeal to the little ones always, and to the others at times: the Shepherd must later be shown in adventurous daring with wolves, the Teacher in courageous attacks against falsity and devilry in high places. It will appeal to the growing boys and girls to know how Jesus stood up and denounced the Pharisees, the respectable religious people of their day, who were none the less hypocrites. The children will admire the chivalry of Jesus

when they learn how He talked with the Samaritan woman at the well and how He answered the Syrophoenician woman's ready wit. His democratic spirit in making friends with all and sundry—Matthew the publican, Simon the Pharisee, Mary and Martha, the woman that was a sinner, the Roman centurion in his hour of need, the Greeks who came up to the feast, and, in His dying moments, the thief on the cross—will allure the spirit of youth, which is ever averse to anything which savours of snobbishness or exclusiveness. The heart of the child will be touched by the selflessness of Jesus, and stirred by His courage, as the record of the trial and death of the Master is revealed.

Not all the stories of Jesus' relations with the child that we find in the New Testament seem to be equally suitable material for the child. The lesson is surely one for adults in the passage wherein we are bidden to humble ourselves and become as little children, and the command, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," is naturally addressed to adults. In this latter story we do find some material for a talk with the child, however, since we want to assure him that Jesus welcomes children. I am not suggesting that we should omit these stories from the reading of the children, but merely that the instruction in them is intended primarily for adults. We do need to guard against the danger of the child becoming self-important and unduly conceited, although we want him to realise that as a child of the Kindgom he is

precious indeed. The fact that we need to humble ourselves in order to become as a child does not signify that the child is humble: we know that the normal child is a very important person in his own eyes. If we can teach him to value himself because of his sacred calling and immortal destiny, instead of on account of his personal desires and satisfactions, we shall have sublimated an instinct which is both strong and universal.

Some teachers seem to feel difficulty in presenting the miraculous elements in the Gospels to the child. It should not be difficult, however, given the right atmosphere of reverence and that respect for the opinion of the teacher or parent which should exist, to make clear to the child the possibility of miracle. If we can approach the matter with an open mind, and no one has a right to have a closed mind on this subject, surely we can induce the child to do the same. Children always appreciate fairness. If we point out that Christianity has worked, and is still working, miracles in changed lives, that the wonder and possibility of human personality is still unexplored, that new revelations of power are constantly being discovered by psychologists, faith healers, and others, that the personality of Jesus must far transcend anything we can achieve, then the child will feel his doubts assuaged, and the pride of his little knowledge will give way before the vastness of the unknown. We need not be afraid of simple argument along these lines: it is our

duty to be prepared for it, although we may not always need it. The records may even be told in such a way that the sure conviction of the teacher will prevent any doubts arising. Every teacher and parent should be honest with the children and should strive to encourage the child to think. We do need to beware of crushing the child's reasoning faculties and thereby leading him to imagine that religion is unreasonable, and "faith is believing what you know to be untrue." After all, Jesus is Himself the greatest miracle of all.

Another difficulty one meets sometimes, and which therefore we ought to face, is that of presenting the story of the cross. Some teachers have felt the account of the hard and cruel ending to a life of love and gentleness is too brutal and too sad to be given to a little child. Again, others say that the child may, like the Jews of old, find the cross a stumbling block. It may seem to them no recommendation of goodness that the Divine Man should meet with such a reward. The child loves justice. His fairy tales, his favourite stories, always maintain that evil is punished and good rewarded. He insists on a happy ending, as do the majority of novel readers and cinema-goers. In the interests of morality this seems desirable. If the universe is controlled by a beneficent spirit, then right must not *end* on the scaffold and wrong on the throne. So these teachers argue in the interests of the little ones they love and seek to guide. They fear that, even if the child is not actually

horrified and frightened, he may easily lose his faith in the unfailing goodness of God. To such parents and teachers I would say, " Do not dwell morbidly on the cross with your children, but remember that the cross is not the end : it is a stage on the way. God is able to turn even such a catastrophe to the praise and glory of His name and to the salvation of mankind." It would certainly be wrong to allow any child to think that the life of Jesus Christ ended on the cross, but the cross must come into the story. Surely no teacher who is at all conscious of the power of the cross would feel satisfied to leave it out of the child's story of Jesus. To omit it is to mutilate the record : indeed, it is to take the heart and centre out of our Christianity. Christianity without the cross is not Christianity at all. We cannot regard even as an elementary form of Christianity a gospel which leaves out the cross. What we can do is to emphasise in the Passion story, and in all the stories, the selflessness of Jesus, His willingness to sacrifice Himself. The child must be encouraged to deny himself, to *take up his cross* and follow Jesus. We make a mistake when we think that the child will only respond to appeals based on rewards. The call to self-denial can be made to come as a challenge even to a little child, and he will take it up. After all children are idealists and hero worshippers.

The Christ that belongs to the child is no mere insipid religionist : He is full of vigorous manhood, chivalrous and gentle, but also strong

and brave. His personality is so powerful that it has triumphed even over the cross and lives still to-day. We need not be afraid to tell the children the whole story, though we may not include all the details the first time, nor, indeed, for many times afterwards. Stories pointing morals for adults, stories about things that children do not understand, or do not care about, may be omitted, but the vital, central themes should be given without hesitation, though not without forethought and preparation. The beauty and truth of the Gospel are readily grasped by even a young child.

The child has a right to claim much service from us: many are the duties we owe to him, but transcending them all and inspiring their fulfilment is this inalienable right of the child to know his Christ. Because the future progress of civilisation depends upon the child having and holding dear the Christ, because the future strength of the Church, whose mission it is to bring in the Kingdom depends upon the Christ in the children, because of these things we must set Christ in the midst of the children, but also, and more, because the Christ is the children's Lord. To Him they owe so much in the past, and with Him as inspiration and companion they can achieve so much in the future. The full, free life, deep and vigorous and strong, which we yearn to see our child enjoy, will be possible for him only when Christ is the dominating power in his mind and heart. This is his right and our task.

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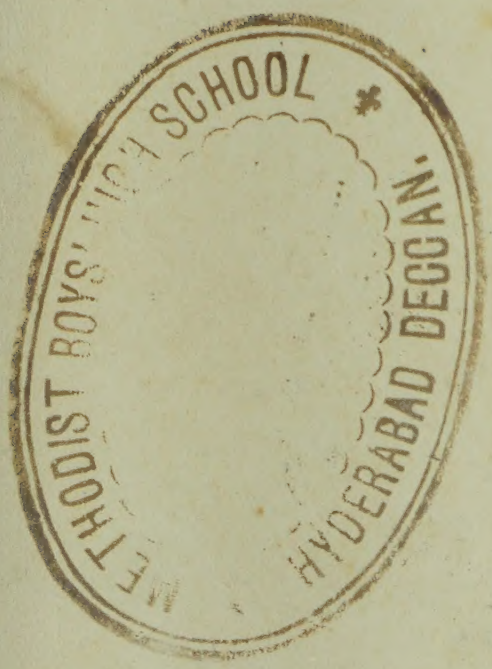
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